SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE WATERSHED PROJECT FOR THE SOUTH FORK OF THE LITTLE RIVER, KENTUCKY

(102-5)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 16, 1991

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE WATERSHED PROJECT FOR THE SOUTH FORK OF THE LITTLE RIVER, KY

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1991

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES,
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:40 p.m., in room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry J. Nowak (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Today the Subcommittee on Water Resources holds a hearing on a multiple-purpose project to provide flood control storage and municipal and industrial water supply for the South Fork Little River Watershed in Kentucky.

The proposed plan was prepared under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, Public Law 83-566. This is the first Public Law 566 project brought before this committee in 5 years. Under that statute, projects with a structure in excess of 4,000 acre-feet of storage need approval of our committee and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate. That committee has approved this project.

The proposed project is intended to reduce flood damages and provide water supply in Christian and Todd Counties in southwest Kentucky.

The local project sponsors are the Christian County Conservation District and the city of Hopkinsville, and representatives from the sponsors will testify today.

I look forward to hearing from our colleague, Mr. Hubbard, the Soil Conservation Service and the other witnesses on this proposal. Before we begin, I yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Petri of Wisconsin, for whatever opening remarks he wishes to make.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This afternoon the Subcommittee is exercising one of our authorities that we don't have an opportunity to exercise very often—that is the review of a Soil Conservation Service watershed project. The particular proposal we will examine today is for the South Fork of the Little River in Southwest Kentucky.

Our consideration of this project has been a long time in coming, since the Administration's approval letter to the Committee, for various reasons, has been delayed in reaching us for about a year.

But, we are now ready to consider this project, which is located in the district of our colleague from Kentucky, Congressman Car-

roll Hubbard. I want to welcome him and the various local officials who are here today to speak in support of the project. Testimony from the Soil Conservation Service will also be most helpful to the Subcommittee as we consider the merits of this proposal.

I ask unanimous consent that an opening statement from the Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee, the Honorable John Paul Hammerschmidt, be included in the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Hammerschmidt's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN PAUL HAMMERSCHMIDT

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony on a proposed soil conservation service "small watershed" project in southwest Kentucky.

The Public Works Committee has an important role to play in reviewing small watershed projects that would impound more than 4,000 acre feet of water. The subject of today's hearing, a flood control and water supply project for the South Fork of the Little River, falls into that category.

Let me welcome our colleague, Congressman Carroll Hubbard, who is a strong supporter of the project and whose district includes the impacted area. Congressman Hubbard has also been instrumental in arranging for a distinguished panel of local officials from Hopkinsville to testify about the dam's expected benefits involving flood control and municipal and industrial water supply. Finally, I want to welcome Galen S. Bridge, deputy chief of programs at the Soil Conservation Service.

With that, Mr. Chairman, let me conclude so we can proceed with the business at hand.

Mr. NOWAK. We want to make sure that we hear today from the Honorable Carroll Hubbard who has pursued this matter with great diligence. Certainly, he has given to the subcommittee a great deal of advanced aid and shown his concern about this matter. We want to give him the opportunity today to express his views before the subcommittee.

I'll turn the matter over to Mr. Hubbard for his testimony at this point.

TESTIMONY OF HON. CARROLL HUBBARD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM KENTUCKY

Mr. HUBBARD. Thank you very much, Chairman Henry Nowak.

Thanks to each of you of the subcommittee for your time and efforts this afternoon. I appreciate your attendance and listening to our pleas for support for the South Fork of the Little River Watershed Project in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and also serving Christian and Todd Counties in Kentucky.

Again, I thank the Chairman. This is the first time I have had the honor of appearing before this subcommittee. I appreciate the longtime friendship of Henry Nowak. I came to Congress with him way back in December of 1974 and was sworn into office January 3, 1975, at the same time.

Members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to express my strong support for the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project. We are grateful for your holding this hearing.

We have with us today as other witnesses of this project, Mr. Galen S. Bridge, Deputy Chief of Programs for the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

With me today is a panel of officials representing the government of the City of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The 1990 Census places Hopkinsville as the largest city I represent in Kentucky, 29,900. Paducah, Kentucky, was the largest city, but it now has only 27,800 people.

The panel representing the city government includes Mayor William Wallace Bryan, who is the popular Mayor of Hopkinsville. He is known as Mayor Wally Bryan.

We also have McKenzie Moss, the manager of the Hopkinsville Sewerage and Water Works Commission, and a former magistrate of Christian County for six years; and the very popular councilwoman, Luevenia Watkins, who for years has served as a member of the City Council of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and serves with efficiency and with diligence.

Also with me today to testify on behalf of the watershed project is Austin Carroll, President-elect of the Hopkinsville, Christian County, Chamber of Commerce, a dear friend whom I have had the chance to be with quite often with in recent months.

Following their testimony, we will be able to try to answer any questions that you and your subcommittee members may have.

Yes, Hopkinsville, Kentucky, the largest city in population in my congressional district and the surrounding areas in Christian and Todd Counties have long been plagued, unfortunately, by a very serious flooding problem that has had a significant negative impact on agriculture, the urban infrastructure, the economy and the quality of life in the region. The proposed South Fork of Little River Watershed Project would provide much needed relief from the flood menace that continues to threaten the health, safety and financial well-being of those who live and work in the area.

The watershed project will also bring obvious economic benefits to Todd and Christian Counties by increasing the municipal and industrial water supply, reducing soil erosion and offering new recreational possibilities and tourist attractions.

In recent years, Hopkinsville, Kentucky, has been aggressively courting new business investment and tourism in an effort to diversify its economic base. Several new manufacturing firms have indeed located in Hopkinsville over the past several years, bringing new job opportunities. It is my understanding that at least two prospective industries are currently considering locating in Hopkinsville. A water supply to meet current and future industrial demands will greatly enhance the area's ability to continue to thrive and prosper.

The Office of Management and Budget completed its review of the South Fork of Little River project over a year ago and transmitted its report to Congress for consideration February 27, 1990. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approved the project last May. Unfortunately, House consideration of this project has been delayed nearly one year since the OMB letter of approval failed to reach the House Public Works Committee in a timely manner.

That is one reason, Mr. Chairman, why we would certainly ask please for your expeditious handling of this request today. I repeat: House consideration of the project has been delayed nearly one year since the Office of Management and Budget letter of approval

failed to reach the House Public Works Committee in a timely manner.

Officials of the Soil Conservation Service have determined that the project will be highly cost-effective. They tell me that they consider this to be a project of highest priority. They are ready to take steps to award the architectural and engineering contract as soon as the project is approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. Local interests are also prepared to take action on the project immediately.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I again thank you and your subcommittee for your interest in the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project, and I ask your favorable consideration of the endeavor. Completion of this worthwhile project will provide much-needed relief from the financial losses and health hazards associated with frequent flooding in the area. It will have the added benefit of bringing new economic opportunities and improving the overall quality of life of the citizens of the region.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much, Mr. Hubbard.

I think at this point in time before we hear from the local interest, we would like to hear from the U.S. Department of Agriculture represented here by Galen S. Bridge, who is a Deputy Chief of Programs, Soil Conservation Service. He is accompanied by Mr. Ronald L. Ward who is a National Watershed Planning Coordinator for the Watershed Projects Division.

Gentlemen, welcome. We would be happy to accept your testimony at the present time.

TESTIMONY OF GALEN S. BRIDGE, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROGRAMS, SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, ACCOMPANIED BY RONALD L. WARD, NATIONAL WATERSHED PLANNING COORDINATOR, WATERSHED PROJECTS DIVISION

Mr. BRIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to appear before your committee today to support the South Fork of Little River watershed project in Kentucky.

Following this testimony, Mr. Ward and myself are willing to answer any questions you may have.

I'll summarize my testimony rather quickly, and with your permission, provide you the full text for the record.

Mr. NOWAK. The full text will be admitted into the record without objection.

Mr. BRIDGE. Watershed projects are initiated by local units of government and other sponsoring organizations. They are developed by teams that cooperate with local conservation districts, county governments and other local entities. Certainly, that has been the case on this project.

The local steering committees are generally formed to give guidance to the planners, help establish planning objectives and priorities and help select the final plan.

The governor of each state reviews the project applications to ensure their consistency with state plans and programs.

The local governments provide the land rights, secure the necessary construction permits, pay a share of the construction costs

that varies depending on the purposes served by the project and perform the needed operation and maintenance.

The principle project measures for the South Fork of Little River Watershed consists of one multipurpose structure to provide flood storage and municipal and industrial water supplies. Installation of this structure will reduce flood water and sediment damage to 1,700 acres of agricultural flood plain, 227 residential, commercial or industrial properties, 11 bridges and seven miles of road.

The plan calls for the works of improvement to be installed over a three-year period. The local people will secure the easements and rights-of-way during the first and second years. Construction should begin in the third year.

The estimated cost of the project is $3.394 million, of which $868,000 or 25.6 percent will be paid from Public Law 566 funds.

The Federal Government will pay 100 percent of the cost for flood prevention. The sponsors will pay 100 percent of the cost for the municipal and industrial water supply.

The expense for possible relocation of two farm residences and one farm operation will be shared by the sponsors in the Federal Government at 74.4 percent and 25.5 percent or 25.6 percent respectively.

Average annualized benefits are estimated at $365,000. Average annualized costs are estimated at $254,000. The project has a benefit cost ratio of 1.42 to 1.

Mr. Chairman, we fully support this project and certainly want to continue to work with the project sponsors and its implementation.

That will conclude my remarks. If you have any questions later on, we would be pleased to respond.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ward, you accompany and join in the remarks of Mr. Bridge.

Let us now turn to the Mayor, the Honorable William Wallace Bryan, Jr., the Mayor of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where you will receive some impacts from this project.

Mr. Mayor?

TESTIMONY OF HON. WILLIAM WALLACE BRYAN, JR., MAYOR OF HOPKINSVILLE, KY, ACCOMPANIED BY McKENZIE MOSS, MANAGER, SEWERAGE AND WATER WORKS COMMISSION, AND LUEVENIA WATKINS, MEMBER, PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION AND HOPKINSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Mayor BRYAN. Thank you.

We flew into Dulles Airport late this morning. We found a driver and got the driver to bring us on in. I told him I was from Kentucky. He said he never had been to Kentucky.

I was just trying to make conversation. He didn't know I was a mayor. I said, "How is the new mayor of Washington?"

He said, "Well, she is just like all mayors. She promises this and she promises that. Sometimes she delivers and sometimes she doesn't."

I am the fourth mayor, I guess, to promise that we would get this dam built. I would really appreciate it if you all would pass it for me.

That concludes my comments. The rest of them are in writing.

Mr. NOWAK. They are excellent comments. If you have anything further you would like to submit for the record, we would be happy to receive it.

Mayor BRYAN. It is in the record in my prepared statement.

I do have Councilmember Luevenia Watkins, with me. The river borders on her ward.

McKenzie Moss back here behind me can answer technical questions.

This is a project where we are leveraging onto the flood protection which we are asking you all for in building and doubling our water supply, which we hope will get some jobs for our citizens.

Thank you.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you. Would anybody else like to make any comments at this time?

Ms. WATKINS. Mr. Chairman. I am Luevenia Watkins. I am city council representative from Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

As the Mayor has stated, this Little River does run through my ward. Several of the residents, during the flooding season, have had to leave their homes. Some of them are elderly and some are with little children.

We would like to see this project go through.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much.

Mr. Moss. May I say something?

Mr. NOWAK. Mr. Moss.

Mr. Moss. As manager of the sewage and water works, we have several industries that come in regularly just inquiring about Hopkinsville, Christian County.

It has gotten to the point now where they come in and say, "We need a half million gallons of water a day," or 50,000 gallons, whatever, we get a little hesitant to just tell them come on in, we have plenty of water. We don't have plenty of water.

This lake would more than double our water supply. As long as I am manager, I would love to see this done. I have been working for this project for, I think, eight years now. I am not sure. If you look back on your records.

But if you could get this passed, it sure would help us to recruit industry, get jobs, take care of the people already there, take care of the children that are growing up and leaving town because there aren't jobs there. We would like to keep them home.

Thank you.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you.

Austin Carroll, who is the President of the Hopkinsville Chamber of Commerce.

TESTIMONY OF AUSTIN CARROLL, PRESIDENT, HOPKINSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, HOPKINSVILLE, KY

Mr. CARROLL. Congressman Nowak, it is a privilege for us to be here today and speak for this watershed project that is so desperately needed by our community.

Of course, we are submitting our testimony, but in addition to the points that have been made: We have a very fine community.

We are one of those communities that is a flatland community and somewhat void in natural attractions.

The watershed lake that we are proposing would certainly enhance our tourism in Hopkinsville and Christian County as well as benefit our industrial recruitment efforts.

So we are looking at it not only from a flood control standpoint, but from an economic development standpoint. We are only asking for approximately 25 percent of the money from the Federal Government for the project. The other 75 percent will be raised in our community.

We have been very successful in private/public partnerships in our community. I think if there is one thing that we could say about our community over the last few years as to why we have been successful, it has been because of a team effort. It has been composed of these private and public partnerships. That is what we are proposing today. We would certainly appreciate your consideration and approval of the funding for this project.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much.

Just a couple of quick questions. When we look at this multi-purpose kind of project, we try to determine the water supply need and your capacity. I understand that is one of the problems that you would have facing you in the future. I wonder if you could give us some figures as to the amount of the water supply you have and the capacity that you presently have and what this project would do for that.

Mr. MOSS. This project would basically over double our water supply. Right now, we are within 200,000 gallons a day on an average of pumping a maximum of what we can pump.

The summer of 1988 was a drought. If we had another industry or two in town, we probably would have had to ration then in the fall. With this water supply, we would not have. But we do have within 200,000 gallons a day of delivering as much water as we can.

Mr. NOWAK. So any future promise of water really is almost solely dependent upon this kind of a project; is that correct?

Mr. MOSS. Yes. Like I say, I have been involved in it eight, maybe nine years altogether. The reason we haven't searched out for another water supply is because we felt like this lake was coming. Now it has been delayed a year in the process. It is putting us kind of between a rock and a hard place when we talk to industry.

Mr. NOWAK. Mr. Bridge, I wonder if you could tell us for the record also if there is a favorable cost benefit ratio relating to the Federal investment?

Could you state that for the record?

Mr. BRIDGE. It has a benefit cost ratio of 1.42 to 1.

Mr. NOWAK. Fine. Thank you very much.

Mr. Petri.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish we had you as witnesses everyday because you get right to the point and it is a pleasure to have you here.

I have a couple of questions which really are not about this particular project, but about the relationship between the Soil Conser-

vation Service and its projects and the Corps of Engineers and its projects.

Could you describe how you and the Corps divide responsibilities for projects such as flood control?

Do you know if sponsors receive the same treatment from your agency and the Corps?

Do you use the same analysis and guidelines for economic and environmental review that the Corps does or are we encouraging the shopping around by people who have projects that need doing because of differences between the Corps and the Soil Conservation Service?

Mr. BRIDGE. Let me respond to that this way. For some time now, for several years, we have had an agreement with the Corps in terms of where Public Law 566 kinds of activities seems to be more applicable than Corps kinds of projects. In a general way, we deal with those watershed or drainage areas of 250,000 acres or less.

We are also capped at 25,000 acre feet in terms of any particular structure.

We generally serve rural communities and agricultural areas. We require that at least 20 percent of the benefits in any of these projects be agriculturally related.

I believe that as a result of the last changes in the Water Resources Act that the Corps does have a little different kind of a cost sharing arrangement than what we have. We now continue to run based on 100 percent paying of the cost related to flood prevention.

I would indicate that we have proposed several different times an amendment to the Act that would change that to some extent. That has not received favorable action on the Hill here. But we are not that far apart in terms of people shopping around and looking for better deals here and there, I don't think.

Mr. PETRI. That was going to be my next question. We had quite a battle here in this committee over several Congresses regarding cost sharing. The Office of Management and Budget felt it was better National policy to have some element of cost sharing by the beneficiaries of a project because otherwise we would tend to do things on more of a political or pork barrel basis nationally rather than on economic merits.

So with flood control, it is between 25 and 50 percent local contribution.

You are saying, though, that so far as this project is concerned, that could not be done because the law has not yet been changed?

Mr. BRIDGE. That's right. But see, this one in total is 75 percent local and only 25 percent Federal.

I would point out that there are some differences in accounting techniques because our projects are not Federally owned. They are locally owned. The project sponsors have to seek all of the land rights, all of the land costs associated with these. They also operate and maintain them in perpetuity as opposed to what the Corps does. So I suspect when you come down to the final analysis, it will look very much alike.

Mr. PETRI. Because they do count land as in-kind contributions.

Mr. BRIDGE. Right. I believe that our projects have been roughly running about 35 to 40 percent local contributions. That would fall

well within the range of the 25 to 50 percent that you were speaking of earlier.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you. This does seem to be a meritorious project. I would hate to see it held up because of some sort of policy dispute here in Washington.

I do think, leaving aside this particular project, that it is important that we try to coordinate as much as possible between the two different agencies and have the same rules for people. It makes it a little easier to understand. Good policy should apply to flood control projects regardless of which particular Government agency participates in the project.

Thank you.

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much, Mr. Petri.

We also have with us Mr. Anderson just to make this a coast-to-coast visit here.

You have Mr. Anderson from California, Mr. Packard from California, Congresswoman Molinari from my State of New York. Somewhere in the middle is Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

I just want to assure you that you will certainly receive the full attention of the subcommittee. We will be looking forward, of course, to providing the full committee with a report of this hearing. If we have any further questions, we certainly will be getting back to you.

I know I don't have to urge Mr. Hubbard to pursue this because he has been very diligent in his efforts. We would have been here until 12:00 midnight if it were necessary, I am sure, pursuing this. We will be working with him, as we have in the past, when we learned of this dilemma you were in. Hopefully, we can resolve it very quickly.

I think the majority of the material is already in-house and will be analyzed. We'll move forward as soon as appropriate. Again, thank you for taking the time to come. You have all prepared yourselves well. Certainly, that input is credible and is much appreciated.

Mr. HUBBARD. Mr. Chairman, I would like to express our appreciation to you and the subcommittee for hearing us and for your consideration of this project. It is worthwhile. The Soil Conservation Service approves it 100 percent and knows it is a high priority project.

Thanks also to Maureen Fletcher, the Projects Director for our staff who worked so hard on this hearing.

[Mr. Hubbard's prepared statement appears on page 28.]

[Mr. Bridge's prepared statement appears on page 11.]

[Mayor Bryan's prepared statement appears on page 14.]

[Mr. Carroll's prepared statement appears on page 25.]

Mr. NOWAK. Thank you very much. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:05 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

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PREPARED STATEMENTS OF WITNESSES

STATEMENT

BY

GALEN S. BRIDGE

DEPUTY CHIEF FOR PROGRAMS

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

ON

APRIL 16, 1991

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to appear before your committee today to support the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project in Kentucky. With me today is Ronald L. Ward of our Watershed Projects Division. Following this testimony, we will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Watershed projects are initiated by local units of government and other sponsoring organizations. They are developed by teams that cooperate with local conservation districts, county governments, and other local entities. Local steering committees are generally formed to give guidance to the planners, help establish planning objectives and priorities, and help select the final plan. The Governors of each state review the project applications to assure their consistency with state plans and programs. Local governments provide land rights, secure necessary construction permits, pay a share of construction costs that varies depending on the purposes served by the project, and perform needed operation and maintenance.

The South Fork of Little River Watershed plan was prepared in accordance with the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, Public Law 83-566. Under this Act, we are giving the highest priority to planning and approving projects that emphasize flood prevention, erosion control, water quality improvement, and water conservation. The recommended plan for South Fork of Little River includes a multiple-purpose structure to provide floodwater storage and municipal and industrial water supply. The ongoing land treatment programs consistent with the 1985 Food Security Act will be continued to reduce erosion and sedimentation.

The South Fork of Little River Watershed is located in Christian and Todd Counties in Kentucky and is 42,800 acres in size. The city of Hopkinsville with a population of 27,864 is the county seat of Christian County. Crofton, Pembroke, and the Fort Campbell military base are other populated areas in the watershed.

The South Fork of Little River originates near the Christian-Todd county line and flows west 12 miles to Hopkinsville. The stream then flows about three miles through residential and commercial areas in the southeastern section of the city and finally joins the North Fork about four miles from the Hopkinsville city limit.

Floodwaters from South Fork of Little River cause significant agricultural and urban damages. Average annual damages in the 2,000 acre floodplain are estimated to be $192,760. There are 227 residential, commercial, or industrial properties that are damaged by flooding. Of these, 137 residences and businesses suffer first floor damages from the 100-year frequency flood. In addition, many residences in the lower and middle sections of the floodplain are subject to smaller, more frequent floods.

Current water supplies for the city of Hopkinsville are provided by two reservoirs and a rock quarry on the North Fork of Little River (2,694 acre-feet) and are supplemented by the base flow of the river. The present daily use almost equals the daily capacity of current water supplies. The Hopkinsville Sewage and Water Commission projects the need for an additional 5,243 acre-feet of water to meet future needs.

The principal project measure for the South Fork of Little River Watershed consists of one multiple-purpose structure to provide floodwater storage and municipal and industrial water supply. Installation of the structure will reduce floodwater and sediment damages to 1,700 acres of agricultural flood plain, 227 residential, commercial, or industrial properties, 11 bridges, and 7 miles of roads.

The plan calls for the works of improvement to be installed over a three-year period. The sponsor will secure easements and rights-of-way during the first and second years, and construction will begin in the third year. The estimated cost for the project is $3,394,600 of which $868,230 or 25.6 percent will be paid from Public Law 83-566 funds. The federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost for flood prevention, and the sponsors will pay 100 percent of the cost for municipal and industrial water supply. The expense for possible relocation of two farm residences and one farm operation will be shared by the sponsors and the federal government at 74.4 and 25.6 percent respectively. Average annualized benefits are estimated at $363,578 and average annualized costs are estimated at $254,215. The benefit-cost ratio is 1.42:1.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I will conclude by remarks and answer any questions you or committee members may have.

STATEMENT

BY

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM WALLACE BRYAN, JR.

MAYOR

CITY OF HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY

BEFORE THE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

ON

APRIL 16, 1991

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to appear before your committee today to support the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project in Kentucky. With me today are McKenzie Moss, Manager of Hopkinsville Sewerage and Water Works Commission and The Honorable Luevenia Watkins, Councilman. Following this testimony, we will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Little River runs through Hopkinsville in two separate forks - the north fork which runs through downtown and through the subdivisions to the north-west of the central city - and the south fork which runs through various residential, commercial, and industrial areas to the south of the central city. The north fork has 4 watershed dams for protection while the south fork has none. Most of the growth in our city has come to the south toward the industrial park and Ft. Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 5th Special Forces Unit, and the 160th Special Operations Unit (Night Stalkers).

This Hearing Panel and the corresponding House Sub-Committee (which will vote on this project in the near future) compose the final steps necessary for our city to begin work on this long sought after flood protection structure. It is our understanding that OMB has approved this undertaking and so has the appropriate Senate Committee. Your approval is the final spoke in the wheel.

The Soil Conservation Service has judged this project to be extremely cost effective. Further, our City, County, and Sewerage and Water Works Commission are working hand in hand to leverage Federal dollars. It is estimated that the savings from just one flood will justify the expense of the undertaking. Further, the water supply will enable the city to continue to grow industrially, so as to provide jobs for our citizens. Hopkinsville is Kentucky's sixth largest city. At present the daily water capacity is 5,505,900 gallons and the present use is calculated at 5,460,000. There is little spread.

We respectfully ask for your favorable recommendations to the full committee, and that the material that we supplied be included in the record.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I will conclude my remarks and answer any questions you or committee members may have.

CITY OF HOPKINSVILLE
KENTUCKY
42240-0707

T. Mark Withers, II
CAO Officer/Clerk

P.O. BOX 707
502 887 4000

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor W.W. Bryan, Jr.

FROM: T. Mark Withers II, CAO/City Clerk

SUBJECT: Fact Sheet on South Fork Dam Project

DATE: April 9, 1991

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service, in the spring of 1989, compiled the following data on the proposed South Fork Watershed Dam Project after almost 6 years of study from 1983 to 1989:

BACKGROUND: In the 1970s, City officials recognized the benefit of constructing a flood control facility on the South Fork of Little River to reduce the costly flooding to numerous homes and businesses in the river's flood plain. Back to back major floods in 1978 and 1979 focused public attention on the need. But because of limited City resources, no real progress was made until the 1980s, when the Soil Conservation Service provided much needed planning and analytical services to design and evaluate the project.

PURPOSE: To construct a watershed lake on the south fork of Little River to reduce flooding. We believe this type project will give us the most possible benefit for the money spent.

At the request of the City Administrative Officer, a secondary purpose was added in 1983 -- that is to have the lake double as a water reservoir. This lake would equal the size of all the other four reservoirs put together and double the City's raw water supply.

LOCATION: Approximately 6 miles east of Hopkinsville in the U.S. 68 East -- Vaughn's Grove Road vicinity.

SIZE: The watershed lake would have a permanent pool of 640 acres. During peak flooding it would be 912 acres. The dam and emergency spillway would occupy another 25 acres. Total amount of land needed = 935 acres.

COST: Total Project cost was estimated, in 1989, at $3,394,600. A federal grant can be obtained to pay about 25% of the cost. If it is granted the cost breakdown would be as follows:

PL566 federal funds = $868,230 for 100% of that portion of the dam deemed to be for flood control.

Local Funds = $2,526,370 to cover the cost of all land acquisition, relocation of displaced occupants, reservoir portion of the dam, raising roads & bridges and relocation of cemetery. The City of Hopkinsville has obtained its share of the project cost through the 1989 Kentucky League of Cities Pool Bond Program, but the money must be drawn down no later than June 1991. The payback cost range from $363,000 a year for 20 years to $315,000 a year for 30 years.

EFFECT ON FLOODING: The lake would reduce flooding by an estimated 70% during a 100 year flood event. The level of the South Fork would be lowered between 3 and 4 feet during a 100 year flood event. (A 100 year storm event is 4.1 inches of rainfall over a 3 hour period.)

Of the 213 residences and businesses normally flooded by a 100 Year Flood, the new watershed lake would prevent 148 of those structures from being flooded.

Of the estimated $4 Million damage done during a 100 Year Flood, the new watershed lake would prevent an estimated $3.8 Million in damage or 96%. Therefore, the total project cost will be offset by only one major flood!

In addition the new lake would reduce flooding on the 1,705 acres of downstream farm land by 44% or 742 acres.

COST BENEFIT: The Soil Conservation Service estimates that for every $1 spent on the project the community will receive $1.50 in benefits. This is one of the highest cost/benefit ratios ever assigned to this type project, according to SCS officials.

OTHER FACTS: Dam will be 51.2 feet high. Finished elevation will be 610 feet. The emergency spillway elevation will be 599.4 feet. It will be 40 feet from the foot of the dam to the emergency spillway. At normal pool the lake will be 34 feet deep at the dam. This will be 6 feet below the emergency spillway.

The lake level will be regulated by two 48 inch discharge pipes that will empty into Little River.

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING - SOUTHFORK LITTLE RIVER WATERSHED
HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY
MAY 3, 1988

A Public Hearing preceded the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting on May 3, 1988 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber of the Lackey Municipal Building for the purpose of discussing the proposed dam construction for flood control on the Southfork of Little River.

Present from the Soil Conservation Service State Office in Lexington were Assistant State Conservationist, Allan Heard; Archie Weeks, Watershed Staff Leader; Taylor Morgan, Civil Engineer; and Stewart Calvert, Resource Conservationist. Also present were Harold Woodlee, Area Conservationist in Princeton and Ronnie Rush, District Conservationist in Hopkinsville.

Mr. Rush gave the history of the project and then Mr. Weeks presented the draft plan. At the conclusion of his presentation, persons in the audience were given a chance to ask questions and to voice their comments.

Ms. Ping Brooks, a representative for the NAACP, said she was under the understanding that this is the first hearing. Notices were mailed out to the landowners and they were given cards for written or oral comments. SCS agreed to meet with them individually if necessary. Ms. Brooks asked how many families will this watershed take in. (Two residents would be displaced.) Will all the farm land be taken? (No, not all the farm land.) She also asked if the roads would be raised, and expressed concern over the impact the lake would have on Butler Road residents and having an adequate opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

Dr. I.D. Oakley, a landowner, asked if the Butler Road will be inundated, will a levy be constructed to connect his property which will be split by the lake, and will there be public access to the lake to prevent trespassing across private property. Mr. Weeks responded it was his understanding that they have not considered a levy in the planning however one bridge would have to be raised. As to having public access, it will be up to the Mayor and City Council to negotiate with landowner.

James Moseley, landowner, owning property immediately downstream from the proposed lake on both sides, expressed concern that his family depends on this river for livestock water and for irrigation and asked what's going to be the impact on water level downstream after the lake is built. He wanted to go on record as saying that his sinkhole "fed" well is 18 feet deep and if the lake stops the sinkholes from running, it may stop his water flow. In which case he feared not only for his livestock but that somewhere down the line that his well, as shallow as it is, may put him out of water in his house. He also indicated that the Soil Conservation Service indicated this area is full of sinkholes and unsuitable for a lake, and asked if more recent studies proved this to be false.

Mr. Weeks responded that it should not have any affect on him, that the base flow of the structure will not be affected. The dam itself will have embankment drains in the dam that will pick up the seepage that should be maintained in the base flow. He feels like it will be an adequate base flow for livestock needs, however, there is no guarantee. Regarding the sinkholes, a geology study was done and turned over to the City to analyze and they can obtain another study if they so desired.

Mr. Moseley also asked if the 3.4 million dollars would include the pipe line into the City or will it be extra. (No, it will not include the pipe line.)

A lady not identified asked about new sinkholes that keep coming all the time. Mr. Weeks noted they will not be treating the sinkholes. They are going to treat the foundation.

Mr. Moseley also wanted to go on record as saying he is not opposed to the lake but would like to have another public hearing held and would like to reserve the right for further comments and writing letters.

Wayne Myers, landowner, asked that if and when they begin selling the land and if they divide his farm in half, will he have the option of selling his entire farm or will he be stuck with a little strip of land along each side that he cannot get to. (This will be something that City Council will have to address.) Also, if he has property on the lake shore, will he be able to get in and out of the lake in a boat and what restrictions will there be to the water once the lake is built, will a boarder be around that lake that is going to protect anyone from going across it. Mr. Moss of the Sewerage & Water Works Commission responded that he did not see any problem and as far as he was concerned, yes Mr. Myers could still have access to the lake. Mr. Myers also asked if he will be able to irrigate his yard and his tobacco crop, will he still have access to the water like he's always had. He was reassured there would be no problems, as long as he doesn't sell the water to another company.

Mr. Myers asked how long it will take to get the dam started, approximate completion date, and if he sells, when does he get his money? Will it be possible to use the land until the section is flooded and have any appraisals been made as yet? He was told it will take 1 (one) year to get the land rights, 1 (one) year to be built, probably taking 3 (three) years at best to be completed. He would supposedly get his money when the land is deeded, and no appraisals have been made yet.

Harold Reynolds, landowner, noted that the lake cuts off in two places at Vaughn's Grove Road and Fairview Road. What is the plan for that road? And, what are the residents going to do about their wells in regards to the sinkholes, if they dry up. Mr. Weeks responded that the road would be raised and that any damage to the property owner should be settled easily.

Charles Oatts, landowner, not sure at this time if he has any concerns, not knowing the exact level of the water, expressed concern about how the lake level would affect seepage into his fields and if he will be able to irrigate in a couple of areas. Mr. Oatts also voiced that he felt a lot of good land would be wasted if it could not be used for some recreational purposes also but felt there would be a problem with trespassers that someone would need to address. Mr. Weeks responded to the elevation question by saying they were not at that stage yet, he sees no problem with irrigation, and again voiced that any damage to the property owners would be protected by liability insurance.

Also in the audience was Ray Hutchens, former Soil Conservation Service officer, who reminded the public about earlier projects on the North Fork that were similar to this one, and how beneficial they have been to control flooding and provide water for city residents.

The hearing was closed at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Mark Withers, II
CAO/City Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | CONSERVATION SERVICE | 530 NOEL AVENUE HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240

April 8, 1991

Mayor Wally Bryan
Municipal Bldg
Hopkinsville, KY 42240

Ref: South Fork Little River Watershed

Dear Mayor Bryan:

The following is the information you requested concerning the proposed flood water retarding structure on the South Fork of the Little River:

Size of Watershed - 42,800 acres
Important Farmland within watershed - 25,970 acres
Permanent pool - 640 acres
Flood pool - additional 272 acres
Estimated flood damage per year - approx $200,000/yr
First floor flood protection will be provided to 127 of the 137 homes affected by 100 year frequency storm

Application for federal assistance submitted by Christian County Soil Conservation District on September 21, 1982.

Planning application approved by Kentucky Soil & Water Conservation Commission on November 24, 1982.

City of Hopkinsville signed Resolution 1-83 on January 18, 1983 to initiate action on the project in the form of Resolution 37-82.

Application approved by OMB in Washington D.C. in February 1990.

Hope this information proves helpful towards your trip to Washington D.C. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Lorin C Boggs

Lorin C. Boggs
District Conservationist

cc: Harold Woodlee, SCS, Princeton

PLANNING COMMISSION

Knowledgeable Service Through Information, Experience, And Education

April 9, 1991

Mayor W. W. Bryan, Jr.
P.O. Box 707
Hopkinsville, KY 42241-0707

Dear Mayor:

RE: South Fork Watershed

As per your request, here are some of my thoughts which were developed with the help of Rick Deason a couple of years ago.

If you have any questions, ask.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

With kind regards,

SJ-

Steven R. Bourne, AICP
Director

SRB:lo

Attachments

101 North Main Street • Post Office Box 1125 • Hopkinsville, KY 42241-1125 • (502) 887-4285

Mankind's endeavors have always been influenced by nature. We choose places to live based on the considerations of geography, climate, aesthetics and the availability of water. We use the resources provided by nature. We modify the natural environment to accommodate the increasing needs and desires of the human creature.

The conversion from the natural state of things to an unnatural one continues on a wide and expansive scale in this country. Our progress in this country is largely defined in terms of growth and development. Growth and development requires the construction of artificial things that result in the (permanent destruction or) alteration of the natural environment. We enjoy the elements of nature that give us pleasure. We appreciate those elements of nature that serve our needs. We attempt to control nature, but as we do so, we sometimes fail to recognize the magnitude of her power.

The residents living and working near the south fork of Little River in Hopkinsville and Christian County, Kentucky, do not take nature for granted. On many occasions, these people have seen the south fork swell from an attractive, useful stream to an irresistible, frightening and torrential force that threatens the health, safety and welfare of those in its destructive path. The damage and the threat of damage has been measured in the millions of dollars. The damage can also be measured in the broken hearts, fears and hopelessness of the river's victims.

But there is hope. A project designed by the United States Soil and Water Conservation Service would reduce flooding by an estimated 70% during a 100 year flood event, lowering the level of the south fork by 3 to 4 feet during a storm of that magnitude. This project calls for the construction of a watershed lake approximately 6 miles east of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, along U.S. Highway 68/80. The total project requires 935 acres of land containing a lake with a permanent pool of 640 acres and a capacity of 912 acres during peak flooding. This lake is designed to reduce flooding by 44% on downstream farm land. This watershed lake will provide a 96% reduction of an estimated 4 million dollars damage done during a single flood event of this type and will prevent flooding in up to 70% of the homes threatened by the south fork. The total cost for the project is an estimated 3,394,600 dollars. This is less than the estimated costs of a single 100 year flood event and, according to the United States Foil and Water Conservation Services, the completed project will return $1.50 in benefits for every $1.00 spent on the development of the watershed lake, making this one of the highest cost/benefit ratios ever assigned to a project of this type. 25% of these funds will come through a grant from our federal government and, most significant, 75% of the funding is locally contributed.

This project enjoys the added benefits of effectively doubling the community's existing water supply and greatly enhancing the area's quality of life by serving as a multi-purpose recreational area.

A project like this is an opportunity to convert a liability to an asset while protecting property and people.

STATEMENT OF
AUSTIN CARROLL, PRESIDENT-ELECT OF
THE HOPKINSVILLE-CHRISTIAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUB-COMMITTEE OF WATER RESOURCES
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1991

Congressman Nowak and Committee Members...

I am pleased to come before you today to request your support and approval of the appropriations for the Watershed Project on the South Fork of Little River in Hopkinsville-Christian County.

Hopkinsville is a city of 30,000 people in Western Kentucky. We're a fine community and are proud of what has been accomplished in recent years by our community leaders. We have found by working together through public-private partnerships, the seemingly impossible tasks are not impossible.

This community, for years, has been adversely affected by the floodwaters of the Little River. At lease once a year, the river overflows its banks and causes excessive damage to homes, farms and roads. The monetary cost is estimated to exceed a quarter of a million dollars annually. The mental anguish is immeasurable. The proposed watershed project is greatly needed...to eliminate this flooding and to provide an adequate water supply for community development.

The economy of this community has been reliant on agriculture with tobacco being the major cash crop. Realizing that we needed to diversify our economic base, the community leaders formed a public-private partnership and together government and business people have achieved accomplishments second to none in Kentucky.

Within the past four years we have attracted six new manufacturing firms and are optimistic about two others who are considering locating here. These two prospective industries would use 8.4 million gallons each month in their operation, and provide 600 jobs for our people. While our present water supply is adequate to service these firms, we need to be planning for the future. The proposed watershed lake will help address those needs.

Another important element of our economic development efforts is tourism. We have a budding tourism program and we've found that visitors want a variety of things to see and do. Nearby recreational opportunities are very important in attracting and holding tourists in the area. However, Hopkinsville is somewhat void in natural attractions. Here too the watershed lake will add to our offering and provide a recreational outlet for our citizens and increase the expenditures of tourism dollars.

In conclusion, the watershed lake will enhance the quality of life for our people by providing flood protection and recreational opportunities. It will increase our economic viability and add to the stability of the region.

Although the Federal Government's contribution to the watershed lake is only approximately 25% of the project cost, this money is desperately needed to make the project a reality. An investment by the federal government in this project makes good sense; therefore, we urge you to vote favorably for the project and the appropriations to help fund it.

Thank you, Chairman and Committee Members, for your valuable time.

Statement of

The Honorable Carroll Hubbard

Before the Committee on Public Works and Transportation

Subcommittee on Water Resources

U. S. House of Representatives

April 16, 1991

Thank you very much, Chairman Nowak.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to express my strong support for the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project in Christian and Todd Counties, Kentucky. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of your subcommittee for holding this hearing.

With me today to speak on behalf of the project is a panel of officials representing the government of the City of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The panel representing the City Government includes Mayor William Wallace (Wally) Bryan, McKenzie Moss, Manager of the Hopkinsville Sewerage and Water Works Commission, and Councilwoman Luevenia Watkins. Also with me today to testify on behalf of the watershed project is Austin Carroll, President-Elect of the Hopkinsville-Christian County Chamber of Commerce. Following this testimony, we will be available to answer any questions you and your subcommittee members may have.

Hopkinsville, Ky., at 29,809 the largest city in population in my congressional district, and the surrounding areas in Christian and Todd Counties have long been plagued by a very serious flooding problem that has had a significant negative impact on agriculture, the urban infrastructure, the economy and the quality of life in the region. The proposed South Fork of Little River Watershed Project would provide much-needed relief from the flood menace that continues to threaten the health, safety and financial well-being of those who live and work in the area.

The watershed project will also bring obvious economic benefits to Todd and Christian Counties by increasing the municipal and industrial water supply, reducing soil erosion, and offering new recreational possibilities and tourist attractions.

In recent years, Hopkinsville has been aggressively courting new business investment and tourism in an effort to diversify its economic base. Several new manufacturing firms have located in Hopkinsville over the past several years, bringing new job opportunities, and it is my understanding that at least two prospective industries are currently considering locating there. A water supply to meet current and future industrial demands will greatly enhance the area's ability to continue to thrive and prosper.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) completed its review of the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project over a year ago and transmitted its report to Congress for consideration on February 27, 1990. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approved the project last May. Unfortunately, House consideration of the project has been delayed nearly one year since the OMB letter of approval failed to reach the House Public Works Committee in a timely manner.

Officials of the Soil Conservation Service have determined that the project will be highly cost-effective, and they tell me they consider this to be a project of the highest priority. They are ready to take steps to award the architectural and engineering contract as soon as the project is approved by the House. Local interests are also prepared to take action on the project immediately.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I again thank you and your subcommittee for your interest in the South Fork of Little River Watershed Project, and I ask your favorable consideration of the endeavor. Completion of this worthwhile project will provide much-needed relief from the financial losses and health hazards associated with frequent flooding in the area and will have the added benefit of bringing new economic opportunities and improving the overall quality of life of the citizens of the region.

SOUTH FORK LITTLE RIVER (KENTUCKY)

Size and Location: Christian and Todd Counties, Kentucky

66.9 Sq. Mi
42800 Acres

Tributary to:

Little River, Barkley Lake, Tennessee River, Ohio River

Sponsors:

Christian County Conservation District
City of Hopkinsville, Kentucky

Purposes:		Percent
Cropland	24,000 acres	56.1
Grassland	10,000 acres	23.4
Forestland	5,000 acres	11.7
Urban and other	3,800 acres	8.8

Total watershed privately owned

Number of Farms: 270

Size of Farms: 150 acres average

Principal Measures:

One multiple-purpose impoundment with floodwater and municipal and industrial water storage.

Annualized Benefits:	Dollars	Percent
To agricultural acreage (land and crops)	7,370	1.7
To agricultural improvement	29,280	6.5
To nonagricultural improvements	142,130	31.8
To municipal and industrial water	268,470	60.0
	447,250	100.0

Project Costs:

	P.L. 566 FUNDS Dollars	Pct.	OTHER FUNDS Dollars 1/	Pct.	TOTAL Dollars
Land Treatment	0	0	0	0	0
Structural Measures	815,200	25	2,433,700	75	3,248,900
Project Administration	53,030	36	92,670	64	145,700
Total	868,230	26	2,526,370	74	3,394,600

Annualized Costs:

Project Installation - $254,215
OM&R - $1,985

Area Benefited:

2000 acres total - with 300 acres urban and 1700 acres agricultural.

Number of Beneficiaries:

Flood Prevention		Water Supply	
Agricultural	140	Year 1986	27,000
Nonagricultural	880	Year 2015	69,500

Carrying Out the Project:

The estimated annual cost of operation and maintenance is $2500.

Benefit-Cost Ratio:

At 8 7/8 percent, 1.42:1

The sponsors do intend to use an FHA loan.

1/ For land treatment measures this is primarily the cost of applying land treatment measures by landowners. For structural measures this is primarily the cost of landrights.

For structural measures this is the cost of landrights and project administration. It may also include costs for construction or engineering services for purposes other than flood prevention.